

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. An image reading apparatus for reading an original mounted on a platen glass with a scan optical system by using an image pickup device,

5 the apparatus having a function to perform a preliminary original reading operation for automatically determining a density of the original before an image is read,

wherein preliminary original reading is performed while the scan optical system is moving from a read standby position facing the original to an image read operation start position; and a white background level correction operation of the image pickup device is performed after the preliminary original reading operation.

15 2. The image reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the original reading operation is performed after the white background level correction operation by the image pickup device.

3. The image reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the image pickup device comprises a CCD sensor.

20 4. The image reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein an image read by the CCD sensor is converted into a digital signal.

25 5. The image reading apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the preliminary original reading operation involves obtaining density data of the original image.

6. The image reading apparatus according to claim 5, wherein a result of the white background level correction

operation by the image pickup device is reflected on the density data of the original image, thus controlling original density decision.

7. The image reading apparatus according to claim 1,  
5 wherein the preliminary original reading operation involves reading a part of the original.

8. The image reading apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein the preliminary original reading operation involves detecting a size of the original.

10 9. The image reading apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein a size of the original obtained by the preliminary original reading operation is detected.

15 10. The image reading apparatus according to claim 1, having a function to specify a kind of the original so that a read standby position of the scan optical system may be altered corresponding to the specified kind of the original.

20 11. The image reading apparatus according to claim 1, having a function to specify a kind of the original so that a read region of the preliminary original reading operation may be altered corresponding to the specified kind of the original.

25 12. An image reading apparatus for reading an image of a original mounted on a platen glass by scanning the original with a scan optical system using a CCD sensor, wherein:

the apparatus has a function to perform a preliminary

original read operation for automatically determining a density of the original before the original image is read; and

preliminary original reading is performed when the scan optical system in an idling state is moving from a read standby position to an image reading operation start position, a white background level correction operation of the CDD sensor is performed after original density data are collected by the preliminary original reading operation, and a result of the correction is reflected on the original density data obtained by the preliminary original reading, to control decision of the original density.

13. The image reading apparatus according to claim 12, wherein if the preliminary original reading operation is performed in a condition where a platen cover is open, detection of a original size in a main scan direction and determination of an original density are performed simultaneously based on image data collected by the preliminary original read operation, and if the preliminary original reading operation is performed in a condition where the platen cover is closed, the original size is detected in a process of the platen cover being closed.

14. The image reading apparatus according to claim 12, having a preliminary original reading system for performing a preliminary original reading operation independently of a preliminary original reading system for performing the preliminary original read operation when a

scan optical system is moving from a read standby position to an image read operation start position, thus enabling changing the preliminary original reading systems by setting.

15. The image reading apparatus according to claim  
5 12, having a function for permitting a user to specify a kind of a original so that the read standby position may be altered in accordance with the specified kind of the original in a condition where the kind of the original is specified, thus changing an original scan region at the time of  
10 preliminary original reading.

16. An image forming apparatus equipped with the image reading apparatus according to claim 12, wherein an image is formed using data of an image read by the image reading apparatus.